

CLAIMS

1. A restraint device for use in holding or restraining a child in a desired position, comprising:

handle means for gripping the restraint device; and

attachment means for attaching the handle means to a child's body in a manner so that the handle means is positioned at or near a central balancing plane of a child's body.

2. A restraint device as defined in claim 1, the handle means comprising at least one loop, the loop comprising at least one of a fabric, plastic, elastomer, metal, ceramic, or composite material.

3. A restraint device as defined in claim 1, the attachment means comprising a single sheet or strap of a flexible material configured so as to wrap at least partially around a child's body.

4. A restraint device as defined in claim 1, the attachment means comprising a plurality of straps configured so as to wrap at least partially around a child's torso or limbs.

5. A restraint device as defined in claim 1, the attachment means comprising one or more fastening devices configured so as to releasably attach the attachment means to a child's body.

6. A restraint device as defined in claim 5, the fastening devices comprising one or more of a hook and loop system, a buckle, a tie, a snap, a latch, or a ratchet.

7. A restraint device as defined in claim 1, the attachment means configured so as to position the handle means at or near at least one of a child's spine or sternum.

8. A restraint device as defined in claim 1, the attachment means configured so as to position the handle means at or near a center of at least one of a child's chest, upper back, lower back, or stomach.

9. A restraint device as defined in claim 1, further comprising a head restraining system configured to restrain a child's head in a desired position relative to the child's body when the restraint device is in use.

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10. A restraint device for use in holding or restraining a child in a desired position, comprising:

a flexible corset or harness sized and configured so as to wrap around at least a portion of a child's body;

at least one fastening device connected to the corset or harness that permits selective fastening and unfastening of the corset or harness around at least a portion of the child's body; and

a handle attached to the corset or harness in a manner so that the handle is positioned at or near a central balancing plane of the child's body when the restraint device is in use.

11. A restraint device as defined in claim 10, the handle comprising a loop.

12. A restraint device as defined in claim 10, the handle having sufficient friction that it can be reliably gripped without significant slippage when contacted with soapy water.

13. A restraint device as defined in claim 10, the corset or harness comprising at least one of a fabric, plastic, elastomer, metal or composite material.

14. A restraint device as defined in claim 10, the corset or harness comprising a flexible sheet or strap.

15. A restraint device as defined in claim 10, the corset or harness comprising a plurality of straps.

16. A restraint device as defined in claim 10, the corset or harness comprising a plurality of flexible straps sized and configured so as to wrap around at least one of a child's torso, shoulders, or legs.

17. A restraint device as defined in claim 10, further comprising a head restraint device configured to restrain a child's head in a desired position relative to the child's body when the restraint device is in use.

18. A restraint device as defined in claim 10, wherein the fastening device comprises at least one of a hook and loop system, a buckle, a tie, a snap, a latch, or a ratchet.

19. A restraint device as defined in claim 10, further comprising a second handle attached to the corset or harness in a manner so that the second handle is positioned at or near a central balancing plane on an opposite side of the child's body relative to the handle when the restraint device is in use.

20. A method of holding or restraining a child in a desired position while giving the child a bath, comprising:

releasably attaching a handle to the child so that the handle is positioned at or near a central balancing plane of the child's body; and

gripping the handle so as to hold or restrain the child in a desired position within a container or basin that holds therein a quantity of water.

21. A method as defined in claim 20, the child being held in at least one of a sitting or standing position during at least a portion of time in which the child is held or restrained within the container or basin.

22. A method as defined in claim 20, wherein the handle is attached adjacent to the child's spine or sternum.

23. A method as defined in claim 20, wherein the handle is attached adjacent to the child's side.

24. A method as defined in claim 20, further comprising releasably attaching a second handle on a side of the child's body opposite the handle so that the second handle is positioned at or near a central balancing plane of the child's body.

25. A method as defined in claim 25, further comprising gripping both handles while lifting the child into or out of the container or basin.

26. A method as defined in claim 20, wherein the container or basin comprises a bath tub.

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